Christian Community

A Program Service of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches, 289 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y., and the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 2969 West 25th St., Cleveland 13, Ohio

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CHRISTIAN LOVE IN SOCIAL LEGISLATION

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God." Love never changes. But the forms of its expression often change so radically that we are in danger of failing to recognize them. In modern society, for instance, there are many economic, social, racial and international relations which, in addition to other remedies, demand legislation in order to prevent suffering, provide opportunities for human freedom and promote peace. If therefore we really love those who are in need, our love must often find expression by urging legislatures to act for or against specific bills. This may seem a strange substitute for the personal kindness of the good Samaritan. But true love will find its insistent way though it must bear the postmark of a communication to one's representative in local, national, or world government.

Is it not also the clear duty of a Christian to participate as an active member in whatever political party not only assures honesty and efficiency in government, but comes nearest to expressing Christian principles in social, economic and world relations? After careful study of the history, platforms and purposes of all political parties, each individual must decide for himself before God which one most truly stands for social justice, brotherhood, goodness and mercy in human affairs.

MEDITATIONS PERSONAL AND SOCIAL
by James Myers

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Local Groups and National Issues

By Thomas B. Keehn

In January 1949, forty-two of the forty-eight State legislatures convened and a new Congress—the 81st—assembled in Washington. Last November's elections produced political changes throughout the country. Many proposals of concern to church members will be considered in state and national legislative bodies. Added together, this is a good time for study and action by local church social action committees on important legislative and political issues.

On problems of this kind, education is both means and end; that is, it is both education and action. Right information plus Christian concern produces amazing things by both individuals and church groups. Here are some suggestions for study and action on legislative and political problems by local church groups.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. *National.* A general political analysis is available through the Washington Report section of *Social Action* Magazine. Yearly subscription $1.50.

A mimeographed Legislative Action Service is available from the office of the Legislative Committee. Write in to be put on the list to receive this publication. No charge.

2. *State.* Many state Councils of Churches provide mimeographed services on State legislation. Some Councils designate church observers at sessions of the legislature. Inquire at the office of your State Council of churches for details.

3. *Local.* In most communities it is necessary to begin by beginning. An inter-denominational approach is often

Washington Seminar group, observing processes of government at first hand, gather on White House grounds following appointment with President Truman.

best. Pick one or two important projects and seek all available sources of information.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNIQUES

1. *National.* Churchmen's Washington Seminars are conducted by the Council for Social Action in cooperation with other church groups. Dates for the 1949 Seminars are as follows:

February	15-18
March	1- 4
May	3- 6

Some seminars are also conducted for young people. Occasionally local churches or several churches from a given area have organized special groups to visit Washington. Write to the Legislative Committee for details on all such seminars.

2. *State.* Several states — Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts—and others have developed legislative seminars for churchmen on a state level. Write to the office of your Council of Churches for details.

3. *Local.* Develop a School for Democracy or School for Church Citizens in your community. Again, the inter-denominational approach is often best. Tackle a problem such as education, or the press, or inter-group tensions in your community.

ACTION

1. The Council for Social Action carries on a program on the national level which can be duplicated by groups of church people on the state or local level. A statement of the CSA's legislative and political program for the next two years will be available shortly from the office of the Legislative Committee. Also a mimeographed copy of the functions of the Legislative Department of the CSA is available.

2. Action projects for every local community and local group vary according to its needs. The important thing is to develop a program based on just a few issues. A program should be balanced by including local, state and national interests.

Write or wire your representative in Washington on issues which you have studied and which you believe are important. This kind of action does make a difference. Deal with one issue at a time. In your correspondence with legislators be courteous. It is important to be positive and encouraging at some times as well as negative and critical at other times. Ask your representatives to visit your church groups when they return home between sessions of the Legislature. Let the Legislative Committee office in Washington know what you say and what your representatives say to you through communications. On occasion, ask the office of the Legislative Committee in Washington to carry on projects for you.

In some communities it will be possible to develop a group of Christian citizens who are prepared to study and act on local, state and national issues. (See article entitled "The Baltimore Plan" in October, 1948, issue of *Social Action* Magazine.)

Finally, it is important in your local group programs to emphasize the importance for Christians to carry out their responsibilities as citizens in voting in every election and in participating in political parties.

Protestants, generally speaking, are poor citizens in fulfilling both of these duties. If party politics, in particular, is considered dirty business it is all the more important for Christian citizens to become actively involved in the political organization and lend an influence for good. Most of all, democracy needs informed and active citizens. This requires hard study in local church groups. There is no better basis and stimulus to action in all the processes of democratic government.

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The Reverend Thomas B. Keehn, Legislative Secretary of the Council for Social Action, may be addressed at 1751 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

NOTE: The Washington Seminar of March 1 to 4 will be of special interest to rural pastors and laymen. Information *for this Rural Seminar only* should be secured from the Reverend Shirley Greene, Merom, Indiana, Agricultural Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action. Total costs, exclusive of travel to and from Washington, should not exceed $16.

For Your Information

The following services or publications are available from the office of The Legislative Committee of the Council for Social Action Congregational Christian Churches 1751 N Street, N.W. Washington, D. C.

Clip out this box, check the items you desire, and mail it to the Legislative Committee.

1. **Legislative Action Service—**
2. **Committees and party leaders in the 81st Congress—**
3. **Information on 1949 Churchmen's Washington Seminars—**
4. **Copy of the Legislative program and functions of the Council for Social Action—**

Write to the Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York, for subscription to SOCIAL ACTION Magazine with Washington Report. $1.50 per year. Other Social Action literature is also available from this address.

Training Opportunities

Attention is called to the following schools and seminars which will aid pastors and other local leaders in developing an effective ministry in church and community:

February 11 to 13. St. Louis Institute on Christian Social Action. For information write to Dr. John J. Kessler, 6639 University Drive, St. Louis, Missouri.

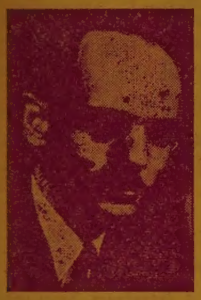
May 23 to 27. Midwest School for Social Action, Camp Iduhapi, Minnesota. For information write to Council for Social Action.

June 6 to 10. Workshop on the City Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. For information write to Commission on Christian Social Action.

July 25 to 30. Deering School for Social Action, Deering, New Hampshire. For information write to Council for Social Action.

CSA Appoints Reissig International Secretary

The Reverend Herman F. Reissig, until recently Field Secretary of the World Council of Churches and formerly pastor of the First Congregational Church of Quincy, Illinois, has been appointed International Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action. He succeeds the Reverend Vernon H. Holloway who is now teaching at Denison University, Granville, O.



REISSIG

The son of a Lutheran minister and ordained in the United Lutheran Church in 1923, Mr. Reissig began his ministry as Associate Minister and Director of Religous Education in the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Brooklyn. From 1925 to 1930 he served the West End Congregational Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut, and from 1931 to 1936 the Kings Highway Congregational Church, Brooklyn. From 1937 to 1941 he directed an American organization for the relief of Spanish Republicans and refugees. He has preached and lectured in many states and in Europe and contributed to the collection of *Prize Sermons* 1933 and to the volume, *The Younger Churchmen Look at the Church*. He served as midwest representative in the campaign for United States participation in the United Nations.

A former member of the International Relations Committee of CSA, Mr. Reissig will work in consultation with this committee under the chairmanship of the Reverend Arthur S. Wheelock. He will be responsible for United Nations seminars, for co-operation with the Federal Council on area study conferences on the Churches and United States Foreign Policy, and for the program of education and action on international justice and world order among the churches.

Mr. Reissig began his present work with the Council on December 15, 1948. *Christian Community* is happy to commend his statement on "Christians and the Cold War."

CHRISTIANS AND THE COLD WAR

By Herman F. Reissig

This brief note on Russo-American relations stresses only one point. *Christians should be the last people to acquiesce either in the "cold war" or in actions and policies which assume that a real war is inevitable.*

In this difficult and dangerous situation there are two kinds of "fellow-travelers." There are fellow-travelers with Russia; if we may judge by their words, they see only reasonableness and peaceful intentions in Russian actions. There are few fellow-travelers with the anti-Russian attitude; their contribution to the problem is limited to denunciation of Russia wherever that country and United States are in disagreement. Neither kind of fellow-traveler is very helpful.

It is one thing for us to be "firm and patient." It is quite another thing for us to drift by degrees into a state of mind which no longer even tries to find out if we really are as right as we claim to be, or if Russia is as bad as she sometimes seems to be. It is at this point that Christians have a responsibility—and the responsibility is heavy. We must go *out of our way* to find a possible basis of agreement. We must take special pains to find and look at whatever can be said in justification of the Russian point of view. We must not be afraid, if necessary, to move against the tide of predominant opinion. If such a plea opens one to the charge that he is a special pleader for Russia, one answer would be that not to do this, not to say, "Wait a minute! Are we Americans sure we have all the facts on our side?" is to open one's self to the charge of augmenting the cold war until it becomes a real war.

But we, as Christians are not interested in labels and names. We are interested in exploring every possible opportunity for cooperation, understanding and reconciliation. It may be that a more sober and earnest examination of the whole issue will lead to the conclusion that there is no hope for friendly cooperation until the present leaders of Russia change their minds. I do not know. The situation is almost infinitely difficult and complicated. Only one thing is perfectly clear: Christians will not, by their words or by their silence, make agreement more difficult. They will try to curb bitterness—not intensify it. We would, if we could, ask Christians in Russia to modify the dangerous self-righteousness of their political leaders. We cannot do much about that. We can warn *ourselves* and *our* leaders against the kind of self-righteousness which drives one's opponent into an ever more intransigent attitude.

To make a specific suggestion: Let's rededicate ourselves to a study of the whole matter—as objective as we can make it! Let's try, more than ever, to get behind the headlines! The material for such study is voluminous. The titles listed below are only a tiny beginning—but I think these booklets and articles are mighty helpful. The authors try to write as Christians and they succeed amazingly well in being objective.

Two Giants and One World, by William A. Loos. 96 pages, including valuable Questions for Discussion and suggestions for further study. 50 cents, paper covers. May be ordered from the Church Peace Union, 160 East 64th Street, New York City, New York. A very careful and well-informed study. For individuals and discussion groups.

Christians and the World of Nations, by Vernon H. Holloway. A Reading and Study Guide for Older Young People and Adults. Written by the former International Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action, this little book of 96 pages is heartily recommended. Russian-American relationships are discussed in chapter 6. 60 cents. Order from Pilgrim Press, 14 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts.

A Policy Toward Russia. SOCIAL ACTION magazine for May, 1948. This issue of the magazine is by no means "dated." In articles by Vernon Holloway and Leo Gruliow, a well-rounded view (within the limits of space) is presented. Copies at 15 cents may be ordered from the Council for Social Action.

In Search of a Prophetic Voice. An article in the December 13, 1948, issue of the periodical, CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS. By William Hordern. If you have, or can get hold of, this issue you will be stimulated by one of the most thoughtful essays to appear in a long time on the Christian position in the East-West controversy.

A Positive Program for Peace. Statement by the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches, April, 1948. 5 cents per copy. Order through the Council for Social Action, or the Commission on Christian Social Action.

McGRATH INTRODUCES NEW DP ACT

A new Displaced Persons Act, to replace the highly discriminatory Wiley-Revercomb Act of 1948, has been introduced into the Eighty-first Congress by Senators J. Howard McGrath and Matthew M. Neely. The new bill is in line with the recommendations of many religious and social agencies in (1) advancing the "cut-off" date for determining eligibility from December 22, 1945, to April 21, 1947; (2) ending the practice of charging displaced persons admitted to this country against future quotas of their national groups; (3) eliminating the 40 per cent preference for persons whose countries had been "annexed by a foreign power" so that refugees from political and religious persecution would have equal opportunity to secure visas; (4) elimination of the 30 per cent preference for farmers and farm laborers; (5) modifying the guarantee of available jobs and housing in favor of the conventional assurance that the immigrant would not become a public charge; and (6) increasing the number of persons eligible from 200,000 to 400,000.

Similar legislation is being introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Emanuel Celler. These bills, together with others relating to this same question, will be referred to the respective committees on the Judiciary.

CHURCHES PLAN UNITED WORLD ORDER PROGRAM

A National Study Conference on the Churches and World Order, carrying on the high traditions of Delaware (1942) and Cleveland (1945) will be held in Cleveland, March 8 to 10, under the auspices of the Department of International Justice and Good Will of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Invitations to members of the denominational delegations have been sent out by Moderator Helen Kenyon and President Louis W. Goebel.

In the interest of channeling the thought and concern not only of the four hundred national leaders who will gather at Cleveland, but of men and women and youth in local churches of all denominations, the social action agencies of the denominations in cooperation with the Department of International Justice and Good Will and city and state councils of churches are planning World Order Workshops in approximately twenty-five centers during the weeks following Easter.

Watch the next issue of *Christian Community* for a report on Cleveland, a list of the dates for the Workshops, and practical helps for carrying on the program of education and action for peace and world order in your church and community organization.

UNITED NATIONS SEMINARS

Members of the Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed Churches are cordially invited to attend the United Nations seminars sponsored by the Council for Social Action. These seminars include: a visit to the United Nations headquarters at Lake Success, Long Island, attending the meetings of the commissions or councils in session, luncheon in the UN cafeteria, a briefing session with talks by secretariat members or United Nations delegates, and a guided tour of the United Nations.

A two-day seminar can also be arranged, with overnight accommodations at the Congregational Christian Service Center on 29th Street, at $2 per night per person. Arrangements for speakers and question-and-answer period will be made, followed by a discussion of the successes and failures of the United Nations, its prospects for the future, and Christian responsibility in world organization.

Talk over plans with your church group and arrange for a United Nations seminar at least a month in advance. For further information write to: Miss Mary Lent, International Relations Assistant, Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

Send to the Council for Social Action for suggestions for United Nations programs in your church, for filmstrips or for sound films on the United Nations, and for materials and literature recommended for study prior to your trip.

HAVE YOU SEEN NEW SOCIAL ACTION FILMSTRIP?

Every church should have a copy of the new social action filmstrip with accompanying sound recordings, entitled **Mr. Harris Joins The Human Race.** It is the story of a church layman who was unaware of social problems, and was interested only in his own problems. He buried his head in the sand just like an ostrich. How "Mr. Harris Joins the Human Race" is a provocative and interesting story telling the relationship of social action to the average churchman and why it is so vital. The filmstrip is a black and white drawing presentation with the script recorded on four 12-inch records—professionally done throughout. Mr. Harris is shown his responsibilities and begins to feel differently about the role of the church in his life.

Mr. Harris Joins the Human Race is available for your church use for $2 plus postage. The showing time is twenty minutes. The filmstrip and records may be purchased for $10. It is an excellent tool for local church use with social action committees, youth clubs, forums, and church night dinners.

Write now and order **Mr. Harris** for **your** church:

Bureau of Audio-Visual Aids:
1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.
1720 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis 3, Mo.

Missions Council Depositories:
287 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.
19 South LaSalle Street, Chicago 3, Ill.
14 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts.
3125 West Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles 16, Cal.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Federal Council of Churches in its meeting at Cincinnati, December 1 to 3, adopted a statement on *The Churches and Human Rights* which merits careful study by all earnest Christians. Copies of this document, containing also the Amsterdam Declaration on Religious Liberty and the International Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, may be secured at five cents each, $4 per 100, from the Federal Council, or from the Commission on Christian Social Action.